

THE OLDTIMER

Volume 33, Number 2

The Newsletter of the Josephine County Historical Society

June, 1998

We have a date

JUNE

■ **All month.** The windows at Evergreen Federal contain a display of World War II posters, artifacts from the community, including ration cards, photos and Victory Garden cookbooks.

■ **June 5.** First Friday Art Night reception at the Schmidt House, 6 to 9 p.m. with "Produce for Victory" exhibit open.

■ **June 6, 13 and 14.** "Rosie the Riveter," a mini-musical performance at the Stardust Theatre, 424 Sixth St. All shows are at 2 p.m. and cost \$7. (See story page 4.)

■ **June 13.** "1942: Oregon's Most Exciting and Defining Year," a slide show with period music and program by G. Thomas Edwards of Whitman College, 3:30 p.m. at the Schmidt House. Admission is free.

JULY-SEPTEMBER

■ A bus tour is on the drawing board. Stay tuned.

■ The annual pie social may be combined with the popular Tall Tale Tellin', at the Schmidt House.

■ The society will have a booth at the annual senior fair instead of the Josephine County Fair this year. If you're interested in volunteering, call the office.

For information on any of these events call 479-7827.



"Produce for Victory" should bring many to the historical society, not only to see the posters on exhibit, but for the many events planned.

'Produce for Victory' exhibit puts society into high gear for June

By Edith Decker

At press time, the "Produce for Victory" exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution's SITES committee was a great success.

It opened as part of First Friday Art Night in May and continues to bring many history buffs to the society's doorstep.

The exhibit of posters from the World War II homefront recalls an era when Americans rallied at home to create and then power a war machine that was behind every soldier and sailor overseas.

The U.S. advertising business went to

work and created bold, bright posters with forceful slogans to sell war bonds, urge mass production of goods, or encourage home produce like canning and Victory Gardens.

Learn about these depictions, how the Office of War Information created and distributed them, why the poster was so important in an era of mass communication and why these images were so successful that

some, like Rosie the Riveter and her "We Can Do It" slogan, have become classics of Americana.

See related story on page 4

See VICTORY, page 2

inside:

Letters to the editor	2
New Camp White museum	3
History at the Center	4-5
Mystery photo	6
From the book shop	7

Letters to the editor

Dear Schmidt House staff:

Thank you for your contribution of a prize to reward Coalition for Kids volunteer campaign workers. Your generous donation of historical publications is greatly appreciated.

Rebecka Binning
Administrative Assistant, Coalition for Kids

Dear society members:

My thanks to all of you who supported me and attended the Chamber awards.

I share this honor with all of you who work so hard with me to make our dreams come true!

Warmest regards,

Marilyn Luttrell
former president, Jo. County Historical Society
(Editor's note: Luttrell was one of three winners of the Citizen of the Year Award from the Chamber of Commerce)

Victory continued from page 1

The exhibit is manned by volunteers every day except Monday, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and admission is \$2 at the door.

In addition to the exhibit, a series of events has been planned around it. Chautauqua programs have been successful and one final chautauqua is set. It's by Tom Edwards: "1942: Oregon's Most Exciting and Defining Year," on June 13 at 3:30 p.m. at the Schmidt House.

Made possible by the Oregon Council for the Humanities, Edwards, of Whitman College, will discuss the war as a defining event for Oregon because of a fear of invasion, blackouts and other coastal situations not faced by many inland states.

Edwards uses posters, slides and period music as part of the program, which is free.

The other remaining event is a mini-musical, "Rosie the Riveter," at the Stardust Repertory Theatre. See page 4 for more details about our local "Rosies" and the show.

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W.A. (AL) TILLERY

Rose Scott:

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to participate in our April 28th "Project Awareness" class.

We especially appreciate the presentation, tour of the historical society building and of the research library.

Thanks again,

Dwight Ellis
Executive Director,

Grants Pass and Josephine Co. Chamber of Commerce

Oldtimer editor:

You have a very good publication with quality photographs.

About the hatpin story in the last issue. My company published Lillian Baker's last edition of her "Encyclopedia of Hatpins and Hatpin Holders" a few years ago. Immediately after she died in October 1996, the book sold out very quickly. Regrettably, there are no more and the book will not be reprinted. Some libraries have copies, including Jackson County's.

Our new book about the Oregon Caves is due out this spring.

Bert Webber
Pacific Northwest Books Company

THE OLDTIMER

is the newsletter of the Josephine County Historical Society,
512 S.W. Fifth St., Grants Pass, OR 97526.
(541) 479-7827

Annual dues are \$15 and include a subscription.

Edith Decker — editor

Lee Ann Tardieu — publishing committee chairman

The quarterly circulation of The Oldtimer is 550.
The publishing committee also produces an annual historical publication, mailed free of charge to all members of the society.

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Remember - what doesn't sell now will probably never sell - but has already been paid for by the Society. Support your Society today!!!

Make checks payable to: Josephine County Historical Society

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What makes our society run?

Our society has hundreds of members, but it takes contributions from everyone in many ways to make it work

Here's a check list of what you can do as a member to help our organization run smoothly.

Do you...

- ❖ pay your membership dues
- ❖ give memorials
- ❖ serve on the board
- ❖ serve on committees
- ❖ act as a docent
- ❖ help in the garden
- ❖ donate items to the museum collections and encourage others to do the same
- ❖ work on special projects
- ❖ help with mailings
- ❖ buy raffle tickets
- ❖ buy items from the book shop
- ❖ bring guests to the museum
- ❖ attend society events
- ❖ buy auction items
- ❖ bring in new members

- ❖ loan items for special exhibits
- ❖ plan, work or install exhibits
- ❖ catalog and store collections
- ❖ clean the Schmidt House
- ❖ volunteer to help with special tours or events
- ❖ donate items for raffles or auctions or money for projects
- ❖ do contract work for less than full price or as a donation
- ❖ bring us new members
- ❖ advertise in the newsletter or encourage businesses you frequent to advertise
- ❖ attend meetings
- ❖ furnish food

Not everyone can contribute in every area, but it is in the combination of all contributions of time, goods and money that will insure our continued success.

Give this form to a friend

I would like to be a member

Please enroll me as a member in the Josephine County Historical Society. Enclosed are my annual dues of:

- ☐ \$15 (individual)
- ☐ \$25 (family/school)
- ☐ \$55 (corporate)
- ☐ \$100 (sustaining member)

Name: _____

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Next time you're down, check out new museum at Camp White

As the society prepared for the upcoming barrage of World War II information, researchers naturally turned to Camp White, our local military installation from the war era.

Mel Cotton, a retired captain, and the director of the Camp White Historical Association Museum, came through for us.

The museum was dedicated on Nov. 11 of last year in Building 200 of the Domiciliary Campus, formerly Camp White, in White City.

The museum is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

It includes a library of military history, artifacts, maps and photos of the units stationed at Camp White from 1942 to

1946. You can even read the daily reports for a record of daily life at the camp.

The camp was home for 120,000 men and women during the war. Since then it's been used as a veteran's facility.

Histories from the many soldiers who spent time at the camp and then returned to live in Southern Oregon are part of the exhibit also.

Membership dues for the association are \$15. You can contact Cotton at the museum office, (541) 899-8842 or write to the association's mailing address, 72 Upper Applegate Road, Jacksonville, Oregon 97530.

Stop by the Smithsonian exhibit and purchase a

\$1 raffle ticket

for:

- ▼ A hand-crocheted afghan donated by Lucille Fisher
- ▼ A hand-carved "Victory Garden Farmer" donated by Dora Bowen

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History at the center

Society sponsors mini-musical on 'Rosies'

By Edith Decker

The Original Rosies

She is one of the most recognizable figures from the World War II era. Rosie the Riveter, hair wrapped in a bandana, eyes firm, hand raised in a feel-my-muscle position. "We can do it!"

And they did.

Rose Monroe of Kentucky was the model for that sign — a woman who did her part by going to work in Michigan making B24 and B29 bombers.

Not only were women taking on these physically demanding roles in a work force that was previously off-limits to them, but production actually skyrocketed with these strong women

in the work force. And they had much less training for their jobs than the men they'd replaced had been given when the situation wasn't so pressing.

Several local "Rosies" will be honored as part of the program of the "Rosie the Riveter" mini-musical which is being produced in conjunction with the "Produce for Victory" exhibit from the Smithsonian.

Flo Smith, the mother of local theater talent Tony Vesely, Margaret Sharps, who still works at Rogue Community College, Betty White and Bonita Spencer.

Spencer will share her experiences on stage — in costume, complete with buttons from her original uniform — after the musical portion of the program is complete.

All up and down the West Coast,

from Long Beach to Seattle, women went to work in the big plants to make aircraft.

But women worked in many other jobs left behind as the male work force was drafted or volunteered for the Armed Forces.

The Office of War Information produced much propaganda on the subject of how well the Rosies were doing to remind single women and those whose husbands were in the service, that they might sign up themselves.

Riveter Rose Bonavita, 21, and her friend Jennie Fiorito, 28, made headlines in 1943 when they set a riveting record at the North Tarrytown, N.Y. plant of the Eastern Aircraft Division of General Motors. The team asked to try to rivet an entire edge section of one wing assembly in

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History at the center

a single shift — midnight to 6 a.m.

That meant drilling over 900 holes and driving 3,345 rivets in less than six hours. They did it.

The wing assemblage was added to a Grumman Avenger torpedo bomber after easily passing inspection.

At the time the New York Sun reported Jennie as saying, "The main thing, as we see it, is to get out as many wings as we possibly can."

The idea was triggered when Rose had received a letter from her boyfriend who was serving in the South Pacific saying that if they just had more planes, they'd have an easier time and that every plane counted. Rose married her sailor in 1944, but she kept working at the plant until after V.J. Day until her husband was discharged. Jennie also married and moved to Florida after the war.

Their story was made into a movie by Republic Pictures, "Rosie the Riveter," starring Jane Frazee, Frank Albertson, Vera



Real riveter Bonita Spencer, front, poses with the cast of the production "Rosie the Riveter," from left, Linnea Kaping, Heather Hamilton, Caroline Berkman and Kriya Kaping.

Continued on page 6

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Mystery photo:

Ox chefs — and the people who love them — are featured in this shot from the 1913 Holland Round-up. Anyone recognize these guys? Let someone at the office know: 479 -7827.



Reproductions of cool photos from our files are available from the research library.

Continued from page 5

Vague and Frank Jenks.

Their simple idea to improve production had made them famous.

A World War II Evening

Kitty Kaping Funk is directing "Rosie the Riveter" an original play by JoAnn Arnold, that features the music of the time, including "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree," "Bell Bottom Trousers" and "Chattanooga Choo Choo" (won't you choo-choo me home).

"It's very lively and upbeat. I call it a historical musical," Funk says of the five-woman play.

It was produced first in Utah in conjunction with this same exhibit: "It turned out to be such a sweet thing on its own. And we heard about it, called them up and sent away for everything," Kaping says. "And it's not just a mini musical, it's an event."

In addition to Spencer's post-play talk, the musical is preceded by a quick talk by Mike Oaks about what Grants Pass was like during World War II.

Then ushers in 1940s costumes will escort guests from the playhouse, which is the Stardust Repertory Theatre,

424 S.W. Sixth St., around the corner and down a block to the exhibit in the Schmidt House barn. The \$7 ticket includes the mini-musical and admission to the exhibit.

Caroline Berkman, who often acts and directs with Barnstormers Theatre, will play the foreman in the play.

"The neat thing about Caroline is that her father was an actual foreman for Rosie the Riveters during the war at Rhor Aircraft Plant in Chula Vista, Calif. So she was really tickled to do the part," Funk says.

Amy Doyle, who was recently in "Inherit the Wind" at Barnstormers, will play the steno of the group.

The three riveters will be played by Kriya Kaping, Linnea Kaping and Heather Hamilton. All have been involved with Bobbi Kidder's Teen Theater groups.

Robert Watt, owner of the Stardust Theatre, has kindly allowed Funk and the society to borrow the theater for the three shows after he closes "Grace and Glorie" and the two short plays, "Porch" and "Laundry and Bourbon" and before the next two plays on the schedule open.

The show dates are June 6, 13 and 14. All performances are at 2 p.m. — so those who don't drive at night will not be kept away from this fun event. Tickets are \$7 and will be available at the door or by calling 479-7827.

Words from the book shop

Gift store has items related to exhibit

A batch of gift items relating to the "Produce for Victory" exhibit are available at the office. Consider supporting the society by purchasing one of these for yourself or as a gift:

■ "Produce for Victory" T-shirts, available in sizes from small to extra-extra large. Shirts are \$10 (\$1 more for the XXL size). They're white with the image of the flag being raised at Iwo Jima with a Rosie the Riveter inset and "Together We Can Do It" slogan.

■ "Produce for Victory" mugs are \$5. They have the same design as the T-shirts.

■ Postcards featuring many of the posters in the exhibit are available at 5 for \$1 and may be the best bargain for souvenir buyers.

■ As many know, Courier employee Jerry Acklen rounded up history for a column. His 1942 to 1945 tidbits of history are available for \$3 each or \$9.95 for a set of all four years' worth.

Other new additions include story of Titanic

We're not COMPLETELY ga-ga over World War II this month. There are some other history books new to the shelves of the book shop:

■ "Over the Applegate Trail to Oregon in 1846," by Bert Webber includes a diary of the time, the Pringle Diary, and an account of a drive over the trail today.

■ "Talent — Worth Its Weight in Gold," by Yvonne Reynolds, is a history of our neighboring community to the south.

■ "Hoffman's Rockhound Guide" which includes a segment on panning for gold and Oregon geology.

■ "American Locomotives in Historic Photographs, 1858 to 1949" by Ron Ziel is a collection of 126 "portraits" of steam locomotives.

■ "The Story of the Titanic as told by its Survivors" is edited by Jack Winocour. Four accounts are included in this volume that adds to the understanding of one of the greatest tragedies in history — a tragedy that has recently sparked the popular imagination thanks to the Oscar-winning film.

World War II is a hot property at book shop

Because of the current exhibit and its many events, books concerning World War II have been especially good sellers in May for the book store. Foreseeing that they would be, our current book shop chairman, Marilyn Luttrell ordered up some new titles and displayed some older ones as well.

Here's what's available:

■ "The Man Who Loved Flying," about Josephine County's own Col. Leroy Gray Heston and his exploits in China and elsewhere throughout the war, is on special for \$5 during the Smithsonian exhibit. The history is by the late Edna May Hill.

■ "A Picture History of World War II American Aircraft Production" by Joshua Stoff documents one of the greatest production feats of all time as American manufacturers geared up for the war in record time. The book includes 250 photographs, some never published before, including of the bomber factory in Seattle, where many locals went to work.

■ "Panic at Fort Stevens" by Bert Webber documents the Japanese shelling Fort Stevens, Oregon during the war — one of the few mainland assaults of the war. It includes 106 pictures and maps.

Pictorial history a collection of images that benefits society

The historical society is helping with a new book that is being published under the auspices of the Daily Courier, "A Pictorial History of Josephine County."

The 128-page hardcover history combines photographs from the society's collection, the Courier's archives and a few private collections. It's now at the printer.

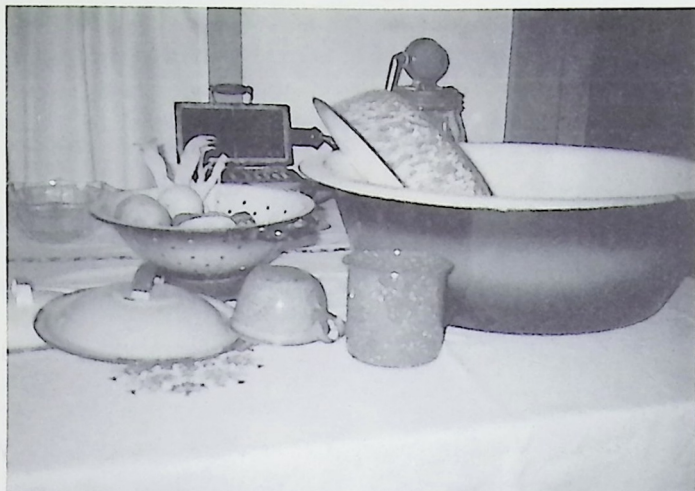
In the meantime, pre-orders for the book are being taken by the Courier — just swing by the main desk at Seventh and J streets. Out-of-town members can send a check to The Grants Pass Daily Courier, P.O. Box 1468, Grants Pass, 97528.

The pre-order price is \$29.95. For an extra \$3.50, the copy can be mailed directly to you.

An extra bonus for the society is that \$1 of the sale of each book will be donated to the society for the use of our photographs.

The schedule calls for the books to be delivered to the Courier in June for those who've pre-ordered to pick up. The book shop will likely be selling remaining books at a higher price for those who miss the pre-order or want to buy extras.

From the collection



One of the small collections in the Schmidt House that makes the kitchen seem old is the many pieces of granite ware — steel cooking items, collanders and bowls coated with layers of enamel, which traditionally have a speckled or mottled effect that makes it look like granite.

The most popular colors were blue and white, but green, brown and black were also used. These were very popular at the turn of the century, after being featured at expositions in 1876 and mass produced. The 1908 Sears catalog offers a 15-piece set of the best, the True Blue brand, for \$4.58.

In memorium

The Josephine County Historical Society is grateful to the following patrons whose memorial gifts were received. These contributions benefit the society and are thoughtful and fitting tributes to those special friends and family members who are remembered and honored.

In loving honor of...

Jeanette Dickson
a donation by Bob Byrd

In loving memory of...

Helen McConnell
a donation by Bob Byrd

News from board members

- Lee Ann Tardieu and her husband Greg have a new baby — Olivia Marie Tardieu, born April 19.
- Roger Ramsey has resigned from the board effective in April as he's working the swing shift currently at the mill. "This is not farewell," he assures everyone. He'll pop up at daytime events.

THE OLDTIMER NEWSLETTER

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